

**Easterling, Deborah**

274637

**From:** Easterling, Deborah  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 22, 2018 1:14 PM  
**To:**  
**Subject:**

Dear Mr. Putman,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your Letter of Protest/Comments to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. Your Letter of Protest/Comments will be placed in the Protest File of the Docket listed below and on the Commission's Website at [www.psc.sc.gov](http://www.psc.sc.gov).

- Docket No. 2017-292-WS - Application of Carolina Water Service, Incorporated for Approval of an Increase in Its Rates for Water and Sewer Services

A Protestant is an individual objecting on the ground of private or public interest to the approval of an Application, Petition, Motion or other matters which the Commission may have under consideration. A Protestant may offer sworn testimony but cannot cross-examine witnesses offered by other parties.

According to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, filing a Protest does not make you a Party of Record. A Protestant desiring to become an Intervenor (i.e., a Party of Record) in a proceeding before the Commission may file a Petition for Intervention within the time prescribed by the Commission.

You can follow this Docket and other daily filings made at the Commission by subscribing to the Commission's Email Subscriptions at this link: <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Email>; or you can also follow Docket No. 2017-292-WS at this link: <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Dockets/Detail/116450>.

If we may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Deborah Easterling  
 Executive Assistant  
 Public Service Commission of South Carolina  
 803-896-5133  
**Sign up for Meeting Agenda Alerts: Text PSCAGENDAS to 39492**

**From:** Bruce Putman [mailto:  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 22, 2018 11:38 AM  
**To:** PSC\_Contact <Contact@psc.sc.gov>  
**Subject:** Letter of protest

Attached is a letter of protest and supplemental information.

Thanks,

Bruce



\* Required Fields

**Letter of Protest**  
**in Docket** 2017 - 292 - WS

Date: \* 2/22/2018

**Protestant Information:**

Name \* Bruce Putman

Mailing Address \*

City\* Lake Wylie

State\* SC

Zip \* 29710-9108

Phone \*

E-mail

t

**1. What is your connection or interest in this case? \* For example, are you a customer of the Company that is the subject of this pending proceeding? (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)**

I am a customer of Carolina Water Service, Inc.

**2. Please give a concise statement of your protest. \* (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)**

Carolina Water Service rate increases have outpaced other utilities and unfairly impact customers. As a retiree the amount I pay monthly on average has increased \$23 per month since 2013. My average monthly gas and electric expense has decreased by \$4 and \$9 respectively. In contrast, the York County water service recently implemented their first rate increase in 15 years. My utility usage is fairly consistent because it is only my Wife and I living in our residence so the increases in our water bills are primarily due to rates. Carolina Water Service is regularly fined for service problems and should not be allowed to pass these charges on to consumers. My water costs have outpaced Social Security increases. Please do not allow this rate increase request. More attached.

**3. Do you wish to make an appearance at a hearing in this proceeding , if scheduled, and offer sworn testimony? \***

I intend to appear at the Lake Wylie hearing on March 6.

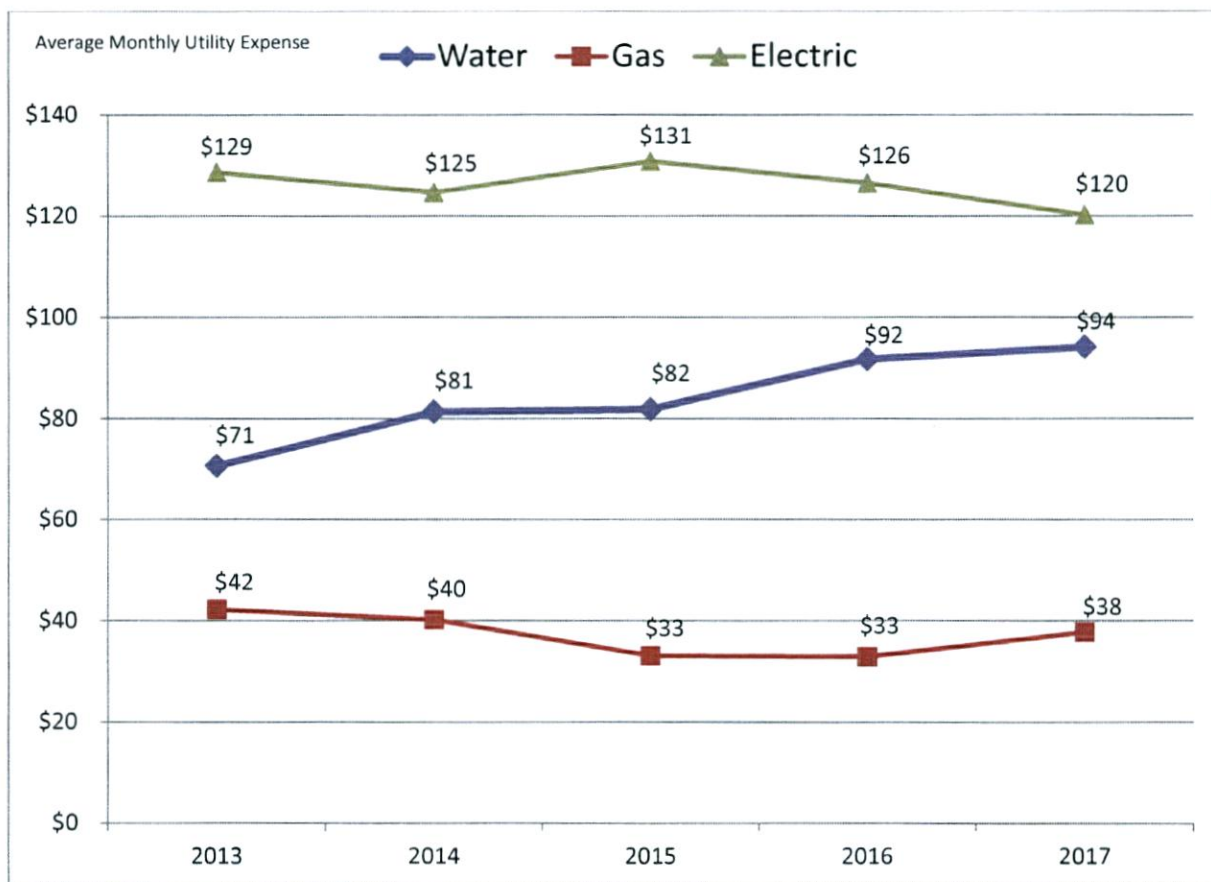
**RECEIVED**

FEB 22 2018

PSC SC  
CLERK'S OFFICE

## Carolina Water Service Rate Increases

Carolina Water Service is once again pursuing a rate increase despite their previous increases that have outpaced inflationary factors. As a retired couple living on Social Security, Carolina Water Service rate increases are particularly difficult for our budget to absorb. The chart below contrasts our average monthly utility expense by utility type since 2013:



The chart clearly shows that our utility expenses are generally flat or slightly declining except for Carolina Water Service which has increased substantially, by more than \$20 per month since 2013. Electric has decreased by an average of \$9 per month, Gas has decreased by an average of \$4 per month, Water has increased by an average of \$23 per month, and they want more! All utilities are subject to inflationary costs and some, like electric, are subject to repair costs due to weather and other factors. Carolina Water Service does not have the expense exposure that an electric utility does since most of the water service conduits are underground and protected from most weather disturbances. Yet they want more money.

In our community we have had a water leak for several years. The street in front of one house stays wet with a puddle of water. A wheel rut in the grass caused by the excess water has created a constant puddle four to six inches deep. The homeowner association has had a leak detection company investigate the leak and they determined it is on the street side of the water meter, Carolina Water Service's responsibility. We can't get Carolina Water Service to repair the leak because it is not substantial enough to make it worth their effort. They waste the water resource and leave the community to deal with the mess. Carolina Water Service has experienced fines due to their poor service and maintenance. Fines should be a loss of profit to the company and their investors, not costs that are passed on to the consumers.

Social Sécurité has not provided income increases to my Wife and I to match the increases previously granted to Carolina Water Service. As a retired couple our utility usage generally stays very consistent. Replacing our air conditioning system in 2015 probably helped or electric usage but there is nothing that causes any significant variance in our water usage. We don't water the lawn, we don't have guests increasing our water usage, and we rarely wash a car at home. The increase in our water bills is primarily due to increased base rate charges by Carolina Water, not increased usage.

We live in a development that has a community pool. Our HOA assessments are impacted by the quite substantial charges from Carolina Water Service for the pool. Our pool must pay commercial rates for water service and that comes with a very high base rate for waste water. The pool is open for less than four months but we must pay the waste water base rate all year round, even when we use no water. The pool does not empty into the Carolina Water Service waste water system, only the two small bathrooms use that system. We presently pay a base rate of \$317.58 per month which is up from the \$223.22 we were charged in 2015. That increase was over 140%. Carolina Water Service incurs no expense from our pool for their waste water system; they just reap profit, even when the pool is closed. Multiply this scenario times all the community pools in the service area and they have a nice cash cow that they would like to raise rates on yet again.

Water is everyone's life blood but we need to stop the blood suckers before they bleed us dry. There is no substantial justification for the continuing rate increases requested by Carolina Water Service. Since 2013 my monthly average water bills from Carolina Water Service have increased by 33% over the five year period. In comparison, York County just implemented a water rate increase of 16.5%, the first increase in 15 years. If the Commission grants Carolina Water Service's current request for an increase my water bills will continue to rise disproportionately to other regulated public utilities. Please deny this latest rate increase request and perhaps Carolina Water Service may be motivated to cut a deal with York County to take over service. If the Commission continues to grant these egregious increases there is no incentive for Carolina Water Service to sell to York County because the profits will keep rolling in, paid for by the burdened citizenry.